

## [John W. Evans]

Interview

Hodges, Carrie L.

8/21/36. cl737 words. 2nd

AUG 31 1936

PIONEERS OF NEW MEXICO.

John W. Evans.

One of northeastern New Mexico's most prominent and prosperous business men and ranchmen was John W. Evans, who, tho'ugh he lived a number of years in the town of Clayton, called his homestead, located five miles south of town, home.

Mr. Evans was born in Madison, Indiana, August 17, 1844. When a very small lad, he was left fatherless. The mother then assumed the two-fold duty of parentho'od to the child, but after a period of invalidism lasting fifteen years, she passed on, leaving her son in the care of very near and dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. tho'mas, where he was tenderly cared for and reared to young manhood.

At the declaration of the Civil War, Mr. Evans enlisted in the civil service, and served his country well until peace was declared, after which he returned to his home in Madison.

He then entered a school of photography at Cincinatti, Ohio, at which place he worked at this profession for several years.

## Library of Congress

He then came West and located at Lancaster, Texas, where he opened a studio. After several years spent there, he moved his studio to Lisbon, Texas. It was at this place he was married to Sarah E. Horn, July 23, 1882.

2

They made their home on a farm near Lisbon for five years, then moved to Western Texas and located near Vernon.

It was at this town he left his wife and three step-children while he journeyed farther west to investigate the new and sparsely populated state of New Mexico, with the view of locating, which he did, filing on a claim of 160 acres, five miles south of Clayton, on the Perico, in the year 1883. Later he filed on an adjoining 160 acres, and as time passed, purchased land from adjoining neighbors until the "Evans Ranch," as it became popularly known, consisted of 3800 acres.

Their first home consisted of a tent and dug-out in which they lived for some time, as building materials were difficult to obtain. At last they were privileged to build a modest abode, which they occupied during their stay on the ranch, covering a period of twenty years.

As this location was in a well watered district, this progressive family enjoyed the privilege of truck gardening and fruit orchard, a luxury denied many inhabitants of the state, even today.

The cattle industry proved successful for them, and they were considered among the most successful ranchers of the community.

In 1891 or 1892, Mr. Evans erected a frame building on the site of the present "Evans Block," located on 1st. Street and Main, Clayton, New Mexico. For several years he

## Library of Congress

conducted a general store, and after his appointment as postmaster of Clayton, in 1893, the postoffice was also located in this store.

3

Mr. Evans was the town's third postmaster, and served in this capacity for seven years.

This general store and postoffice building was destroyed by fire in later years, and, the building known as the Land Office Building-at the present time, the home of the W. P. A. office force- was erected on the site. The other frame buildings that compose the "Evans Block," were also built at the same time.

It will be of historical interest to the present generation to know that the stone building, located in the "Evans Block," on 1st. Street is the first location of the original "Tixier Dry Goods Store," owned and operated by the late M. B. Tixier, of Clayton. This building was erected by Mr. Evans for the sole purpose of accommodating Mr. Tixier in his business efforts.

After his resignation from the position of postmaster, Mr. Evans retired for a period of relaxation, after which he accepted the position of cashier in the First National Bank of Clayton, organized and operated by the late Herbert J. Hammond, Sr., and located in the old postoffice building.

At this time the Evans family moved into town and resided in what is now known as the Dr. Charlton home on Main Street, one door east of the present Pioneer Garage.

After serving in the capacity of Cashier for a number of years, Mr. Evans retired from active business and spent the remainder of his days at the ranch home, now known as the Rixey Ranch, on Perico Creek.

On July 31, 1911, he passed away, and with his passing, Clayton lost one of its earliest most respected and influential citizens.

## Library of Congress

Hodges, Carrie L.

John W. Evans.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Interview, Mrs. Sarah E. Evans, 324 Pine St., Clayton, New Mexico, to Carrie L. Hodges, August 21, 1936.